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SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS OF BIBLE CLUBS USING THE OUTLINE COURSES

Every month from October to June there will be presented in this department of the BIBLICAL WORLD suggestions to leaders of Bible Classes, desiring to use as a basis for class work either the outline Bible-study course on "THE LIFE OF CHRIST" prepared by ERNEST D. BURTON, or that on "THE FORESHADOWINGS OF THE CHRIST" by WILLIAM R. HARPER. Suggestions are prepared by GEORGIA LOUISE CHAMBERLIN, Secretary of the Reading and Library Department of the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE, who will be glad to consider any questions which club leaders may choose to address to the INSTITUTE.

The Life of Christ¹

In continuing the study of the events of the closing week of the earthly life of Jesus, we should keep in mind the whole week. We shall recall its beginning in the popular demonstration of enthusiasm attending the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Sunday morning, and continuing in conspicuous exhibitions of authoritative acts and words on the part of Jesus, who clearly intended the people to understand that he regarded himself as the Jewish Messiah.

Important events crowded upon each other so rapidly in these closing days that the leader is tempted to dwell too fully upon details. In the private study of the members of the class, there is ample time for the consideration of details. At the sessions of the classes, the effort should be made to keep before the students Jesus as a dominant personality, to all outward appearances defeated and driven to the wall by his enemies, but in reality strong and triumphant in his consciousness of having completed a great work for the Father. Were not all things in the hands of the Father? If it was his will that Jesus should die, then it followed in the philosophy of Jesus that his work was finished, and there remained now on the one hand last messages of warning for those who were too blind to see the truth, and on the other, the task of fortifying for the

future, and comforting, in their coming bereavement, those companions who had most nearly been able to look upon life through the eyes of Jesus.

Whether the gospels give us the exact order in which the events of these days occur, or whether we know precisely the day of the week with which each was associated, matters little to the student who is seeking to gain inspiration for his own life from the deeds and words of Jesus. The emphasis should be placed upon the man who, in his acute intellectual battles, his righteous indignation, his avoidance of unnecessary danger, and his loving intercourse with his friends, shows himself essentially human. Not the less do we recognize the divine personality which finds its expression in an infallible insight into the nature of God and the hearts of his friends, in unerring ethical judgment, in the triumphal recognition of his mission and its accomplishment, and in his ability to see his life as an achievement rather than a failure, and to rest peacefully in the confidence that the whole world would one day recognize his teaching and follow it.

In a general way, the material which may be studied gathers around the following topics: (1) the astuteness of Jesus in questions and counter-questions with the Pharisees and Sadducees; (2) his final

¹The textbook of this course is *The Life of Christ*, by Ernest D. Burton; 50 cents, plus 4 cents postage. Address The AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

pronouncement against them because of the lack of correspondence between their teaching and their lives; (3) the constructive teaching of the Twelve regarding the future and the necessity of preparedness for persecution and disaster, as well as for his own ultimate return; (4) the establishment of a permanent memorial, the farewell messages, and final commitment of the disciples to the care of the Father in prayer.

Specifically, programs may be as follows:

Program I

Leader: Jerusalem in Passover week, and its significance to Jesus.

Members of the class: (1) Three dialogues with Jesus: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, a lawyer. A reading of each in dialogue with a discussion of its significance and Jesus' manner of reply. (2) An analysis of Jesus' final arraignment of the Scribes and Pharisees. (3) Jesus' farewell to Jerusalem. (4) Three parables teaching the apostles the gospel of preparedness. (5) The conspiracy and its causes.

Subject for discussion: Was Jesus ambitious to teach people outside of his own nation the principles of the kingdom of God? If so, why did he not make his escape to some foreign country?

Program II

Leader: The Eucharist in the belief and practice of different churches.

Members of the class: (1) An interpretation of Jesus' motive in washing the feet of his disciples, and its message to modern life. (2) The problem and character of the betrayer. (3) The memorial of bread and wine and its significance to Jesus and to the disciples. (4) A selection from the choicest phrases of the farewell discourses of Jesus.

Subject for discussion: A study of the groups of figures in Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper," and the works of other more modern artists. (Use Perry pictures.)

REFERENCE READING

Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, II, 380-532; Weiss, *The Life of Christ*, III, 233-318; Rhee, *The Life of Jesus*, pp. 172-87; Sanday, *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, pp. 139-70; Andrews, *The Life of Our Lord*, pp. 438-97; Stalker, *The Life of Christ*, pp. 108-17; Gilbert, *The Student's Life of Jesus*, pp. 320-54; Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, chaps. li-lvi; Stalker, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, chaps. v, vi, vii; Holtzmann, *The Life of Jesus*, pp. 421-67; Burton and Mathews, *Constructive Studies in the Life of Christ*, chaps. xxx-xxxiii.

Consult Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, four-volume and one-volume editions, and Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

The Foreshadowings of the Christ¹

The history of Israel following the Exile was never glorious. It consisted in a series of successive persecutions, and a bandying-about at the hands of successive masters, which, except for the fact that the Jews were in their homeland, would have been as difficult to endure as the Exile. The remaining literature of prophecy, relating to the messianic king and kingdom, has always this background of suffering. The prevailing

note of appeal to Jehovah for deliverance is, however, offset by the glorious prophetic promises of a redeemed city, and peace and prosperity under the continuous blessed reign of Jehovah, who would himself come to reign over his people, either in person, or through a representative whom he would send.

Much difficulty has been experienced by scholars in placing the different passages

¹The textbook for this course is *The Foreshadowings of the Christ*, by William Rainey Harper; 50 cents, plus 4 cents postage. Address the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

which constitute the work for this month. The consensus of opinion has dated several of the passages much later than the Exile, especially those from Daniel. The data on which these opinions are based is difficult to handle, and for a popular class it is better to place the emphasis upon the spirit of the passages—the fact that they reflect suffering and the analysis of the ideal of the messianic kingdom as here portrayed. Briefly, we have: (1) the free invitation to all to unite with the Hebrew nation, and so to come into relationship with Jehovah; (2) the expansion of this invitation into a universal message to all men; (3) the wonderful city of promise; (4) the ministry of the "Servant of Jehovah" to the poor, the sick, and the afflicted; (5) Jehovah's imminent coming and universal reign; (6) the future honorable place of the Hebrew nation among the nations of the earth; (7) universal peace; (8) universal worship of Jehovah; (9) the necessity of sincerity in the worship of Jehovah.

Many of the passages are beautiful as gems of literature, and so universal in spirit that they should be memorized. Members of the class will be stimulated to memorize these passages if they are expected to recite them rather than to read them in the programs of the class.

Program I

Leader: Examples of great literature (not biblical) which had its birth in times of revolution and national disaster.

Members of the class: (1) The prophetic picture of the ideal ruler. (2) The prophetic picture of the new Jerusalem. (3) Reading or recitation of the "Great Invitation," Isaiah, chap. 55. (4) Reading or recitation,

the "Chapter of Comfort," Isaiah, chap. 40. (5) The message of Isaiah for men of today.

Subject for discussion: How much nearer are we today to universal peace than in the days of Isaiah?

Program II

Leader: Rapid review of the development of the "foreshadowings," up to this period.

Members of the class: (1) Prophetic ideals which were too lofty for an earthly city. (2) Reading or recitation and discussion of passages from chaps. 40–56, which represent Jehovah as the creator and ruler of the world. (3) The prophetic ideal of conditions upon which Jehovah's promises might be accepted. (4) The visions of Daniel.

Subject for discussion: In what sense have all these prophecies been fulfilled in the coming of Jesus, and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth?

REFERENCE READING

Smith, *Old Testament History*, chap. xv; Kent, *History of the Jewish People*, I, 3–98; Wade, *Old Testament History*, pp. 389 ff.; George Adam Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. II; Goodspeed, *Israel's Messianic Hope*, chap. vii; Addis, *Hebrew Religion*, chaps. vii–viii; Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*, chaps. xii, xiii; Woods, *The Hope of Israel*, chaps. v, vi, vii. Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 125–44, 174–79; Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, pp. 351–410.

Volumes on Isaiah in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, the *Century Bible*, and the *Bible for Home and Schools*. Consult Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* for articles on "Messiah," "The Book of Daniel," and selections from the article on "The Kingdom of God."